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ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 031814Z APR 06 ZDK DUE TO NUMEROUS SVCS  
FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3455  
INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE  
RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBP/AMEMBASSY BAMAKO 0557  
RUEHGI/AMEMBASSY BANGUI 1130  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1255  
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 0517  
RUEHNM/AMEMBASSY NIAMEY 2535  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1642  
RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE 1015  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0644  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0646

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 NDJAMENA 000492

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OFDA

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TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [ASEC](#) [CD](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: CHAD/SUDAN: FIGHTING, IDPS, AND RECRUITMENT

REF: A. A. NDJAMENA 425

[1](#)B. B. NDJAMENA 462

[1](#)C. C. NDJAMENA IIR MAR 31

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[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: ICRC does not foresee a major displacement of Chadian IDPs away from the border unless fighting is persistent; UNHCR is more worried. UNHCR has long suspected recruitment in the refugee camps and now has clear proof. UNHCR sees Chad as complicit and Darfur rebels as the recruiters. SLM leader Minni Minawi disclaims any knowledge. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Poloff spoke to ICRC and UNHCR March 31 and April 3 to get clarification on the battle that took place March 30-31 between the RDL rebel force under Mahamat Nour and its consequences for the internally displaced Chadian population located in the area of the fighting. Poloff also asked UNHCR about recruitment of Darfurian refugees in Chad.

Fighting March 30-31  
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[1](#)3. (SBU) The trapezoid-shaped piece of Chadian territory across the Wadi Kadja, populated by people of the Dadjo tribe, was largely evacuated by its population in the period December-February, in the wake of the fighting around Adre, withdrawal of Chadian security forces from the area, and attacks by Arabs (ref A). The largest portion of these people moved to the southwestern (right) bank of the Wadi Kadja and congregated around the largest local village, Koloy. ICRC learned that elements of Mahamat Nour's RDL appeared across the Wadi Kadja and occupied the now-evacuated village of Modoyna (aka Madeina) on Sunday March 26. In the following days, RDL also came into Koloy, making purchases in the market. It became widely known that the RDL was present in the area with significant numbers. On Wednesday March 29, ICRC had a team poised to move from Goz Beida (seat of the prefect for the department that covers the entire area) to Koloy, but the team was stopped by Chadian authorities in Ade and informed that the area was closed. ICRC learned that the Chadian armed forces were moving into the area from points north, hurrying to take on the RDL. ICRC's sources further indicated that the Chadian armed forces were ambushed on the north side of the Wadi Kadja. The battle, which took place mainly on March 30, resulted in the death of the Chadian chief of staff, General Abakar Itno, and another general. ICRC understood that "dozens" in the Chadian armed forces died, and "at least 100" were wounded.

[1](#)4. (SBU) UNHCR representative Ana Liria-Franch said that UNHCR also had personnel in the area on March 30 and they believed that the ambush occurred nearer to Ade, some 30 miles to the west. Liria-Franch saw the Interior Minister Mahamat Ali on March 28 and delivered an appeal that Chad reestablish security in the area south of Adre, particularly to include Koloy. The minister had told her that it was in Chad's interest as much as the international community's to reestablish security there, as Chad wanted to ensure the fastest possible return of these IDPs to their villages and farms. Mahamat Ali told her that the armed forces were going to be dispatched to the area soon. Liria-Franch surmised that the ostentatious presence of RDL forces in Koloy and Modoyna had forced Chad's hand, prompting the armed forces to move

precipitately.

15. (SBU) Comment: When Mahamat Ali received the Ambassador, immediately after Liria-Franch, on March 28, he dismissed Mahamat Nour's RDL as an insignificant force (ref B) and he was riding high on the basis of the blow that the Chadian armed forces had given the Zaghawa rebel group SCUD on March 22. That euphoria was short-lived. End Comment.

Effect on the IDPs

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16. (SBU) Prior to the fighting, on March 27, ICRC, MSF, and UNHCR came to agreement that the number IDPs in the entire border zone running from Goungour (25 miles south of Adre) to Daguessa (125 miles south of Adre) now totaled between 31,400 and 44,050, with ICRC tending toward the lower figure. ICRC in ref A, in mid-March, had provided a significantly lower tally (20,000). ICRC director Thomas Merkelbach explained that part of the new tally was accounted for by IDPs not previously counted in the far south of this region, near Daguessa, where there had been an attack during the past two weeks; over 5,000 IDPs were now to be found in that area (Dogdore and Tour, west of Daguessa), many of whom had come from villages just south of Koloy. Otherwise, the change was largely due to more thorough canvassing of the area, revealing a higher number of IDPs who had already fled in the December-February period. ICRC said that the number of IDPs moving from Koloy to the main town of Goz Beida had increased to 2500-3000, but the rate of IDPs moving from Koloy to Goz Beida had decreased the previous week.

17. (SBU) Merkelbach said that ICRC had no information from its people on the ground suggesting a major change in IDP locations due to the fighting March 30-31. IDPs in Koloy had seemed relatively unfazed by the RDL presence in the area. He said that the presence of the Chadian armed forces in the Koloy area could cut both ways. On the one hand, they could be the factor for security that the international community had asked for and that had been missing in the area since the forces withdrew completely in December. On the other hand, if fighting continued, if armed bands moved back and forth through the Koloy area, if the Chadian forces or RDL or Sudanese-Arab allies of the RDL harmed the IDPs and local populace, both IDPs and villagers that had not previously moved could decide the area was too unsafe and move inland, especially to Goz Beida. Liria-Franch took the view that the IDPs/villagers were already making the decision to move to Goz Beida. She said that her staff were advising her to double or even triple the projected IDPs.

Recruitment of Refugees

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18. (SBU) On the UNHCR announcement in Geneva March 31 that "armed groups" had forcibly seized several hundred Sudanese refugees from camps in Chad for military training, Liria-Franch said that UNHCR had suspected for two years that recruitment was taking place but had not previously had proof. Now it was confirmed. She said it was typical, in her experience of refugee camps in various parts of the world, for secrecy surrounding and enthusiasm for recruitment to begin to break down within a few years of the outbreak of conflict, and such appeared to be the case among the Darfurian refugees in Chad. The first confirmation came on March 2-3 when a truckload of youths was intercepted at Koundungo camp, and refugees in the camp had spilled the beans that the youths had been actively recruited for the Darfur rebellion. Then UNHCR learned that on 17-19 March Bredjing and Treguine camps had been surrounded by recruiters wielding sticks and whips, who rounded up 400-500 men, a few of them under 18, and transported them to a "training base" (bare field) between Hadjar Hadid and Borota (village called Arkoum). Some of the young men had been forcibly recruited, but MSF believed 70 percent had gone voluntarily. Again, a number of refugees in the camps spilled the beans. The prefet in Adre and sous-prefet in Hadjar Hadid denied any knowledge, as did the gendarmes at the camps.

19. (SBU) Liria-Franch said that the ignorance of the Chadian authorities, who should have known what was going on, had at first caused her to speculate that it was the Chadian authorities doing the recruiting. However, multiple refugee accounts now established that the recruitment was being done by one or more Darfurian rebel groups, probably the SLM or one of its splinter groups. She concluded that the Chadian government was complicit, that a decision had been made,

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presumably at some senior level of the government, to wink at the recruitment. It was also possible, she speculated, that the SLM had bought off officials and gendarmes. Liria-Franch said she had formally written the Interior Minister and discussed the recruitment issue with him, letting him know that UNHCR would be going public. She said that the UN resrep would raise the issue with President Deby.

110. (SBU) During SLM leader Minni Minawi's transit through

Abeche on his way to his father's funeral April 2, the Ambassador asked him about reports of recruitments in the camps. He said he was aware of the UNHCR statements, but having spent recent weeks far from the field at the Darfur peace talks in Abuja, he claimed he was not familiar with the matter. He added that he did not know who might be responsible.

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